

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending. By this Amendment, Claim 12 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 1 and 11 are amended. Because support for the claim amendments and subject matter recited in the newly added claims is provided in the originally filed application, see, for example, Figures 3 and 5A-D, Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter is presented herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-024171 to Fuji. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, since Claim 12 is canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant respectfully submits the rejection is rendered moot and should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. WO 01/34262 to Sokolov et al. (Sokolov) in view of Fuji. Claims 2-6 and 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sokolov in view of Fuji as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 4,987,639 to Baiuley et al. (Baiuley) or U.S. Patent Number 1,393,139 to Kiesel Jr. (Kiesel). Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sokolov in view of Fuji as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of JP 08-240060 to Baba et al. (Baba).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections for the following reason(s).

Claims 1 and 11 each recite a gaming machine including, among other features, an upper support member arranged at an upper position in one side of a second opening, ***wherein the upper support member defines a ceiling of the second opening;*** and a lower support member arranged at a lower position in the one side of the second opening, ***wherein the lower support member defines a bottom of the second opening.***

For example, the upper support member or ceiling plate 81 corresponds to the ceiling of the second opening and the lower support member 82 corresponds to the bottom of the second opening.

Applicant respectfully submits that Sokolov, Fuji, Baiuley, Kiesel and Baba, alone or any combination thereof, fail to teach or suggest the emphasized feature recited by independent Claims 1 and 11.

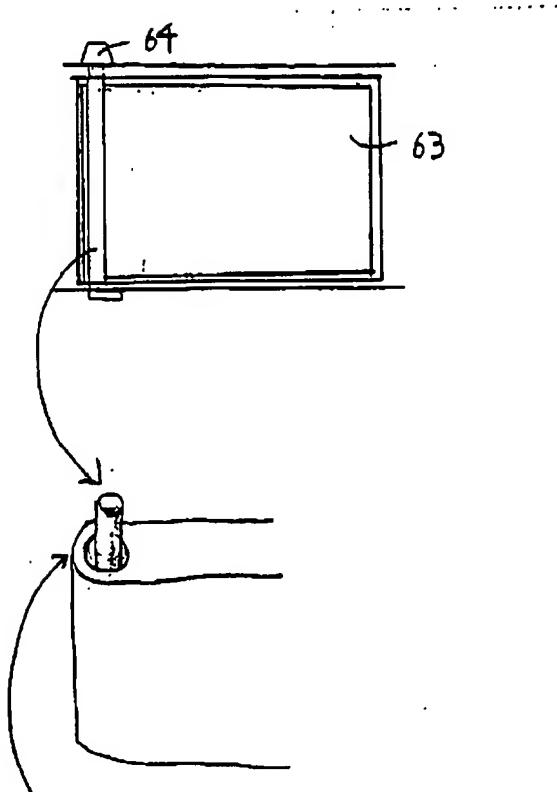
Sokolov teaches a gaming machine having a second opening 12 wherein a door 10 is rotatably attached to one side of the second opening 12 via a hinge assembly. The hinge assembly includes an upper support member 42, 44, and 46 (Fig. 3) arranged at an upper position of the one side of the second opening 12 and a lower support member 42, 44 and 46 (Fig. 3) arranged at a lower position of the one side of the second opening 12. Separate shaft member 16 and 18 are rotatably supported in the upper and lower support members 42, 44 and 46. See Figures 1-3 of Sokolov.

However, Applicant respectfully notes that the upper and lower support members 42, 44 and 46 are each provided on an outer support frame 22. See Figure 3. Therefore, the upper and lower support members 42, 44 and 46 of Sokolov cannot define a ceiling and bottom of the second opening 12.

Fuji is cited for teaching a game machine having a hinge construction having a long shaft member that is rotatably supported by an upper support member and a lower support member. Applicant respectfully submits that Fuji does not cure or otherwise address the above described deficiency of Sokolov.

For example, according to the present invention, the support shaft is supported by the ceiling and bottom of the second opening. The support shaft is inserted into the through hole formed inside the frame plate with little, if any, frictional resistance. Therefore, the claimed structural configuration of the ceiling and bottom of the second opening helps reduce frictional resistance when the frame plate is opened and closed. See the sketch provided below.

[Present Application]

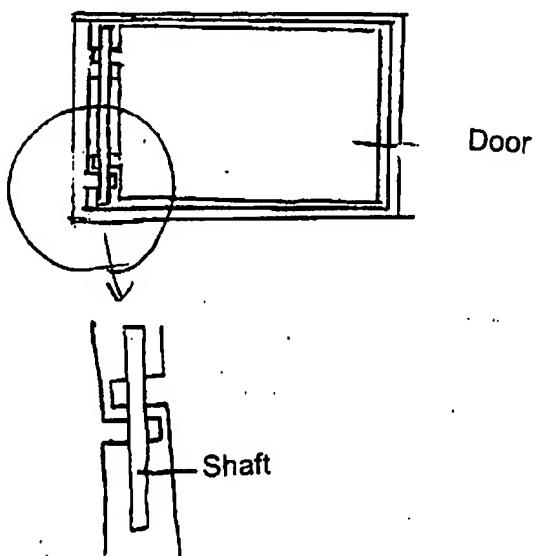


The diameter of the through hole 633 is smaller than that of the support shaft 64. The frame plate 63 is opened and closed without frictional resistance because the support shaft 64 and the through hole 633 do not get contact with each other surface on surface.

In contrast, with regards to the proposed Sokolov-Fuji combination, in addition to not teaching or suggesting that which is recited by Claim 1 and 11, the combination would produce a hinge-like support shaft that makes surface to surface contact with the bearing, wherein frictional resistance would occur and at

a significantly greater degree than the present invention when the Sokolov-Fuji door is opened and closed. Especially since Fuji discloses that the rotary shaft 23 of the hinge contacts the console-side shaft receptor portion 28a in a surface to surface manner. See the sketch provided below.

[Combination of Sokolov & Fujii]



The door gets contact with a surface of the shaft that supports weight of the door.
Therefore, frictional resistance of the door and the shaft is larger in comparison with the present application

To establish *prima facie* obviousness, each and every feature recited by a rejected claim must be taught or at least suggested by the applied art of record. See M.P.E.P. §2143.03.

Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11 are not rendered obvious in view of Sokolov and Fuji because even if Sokolov were modified according to the cited teachings of Fuji as proposed by the Office Action, such a modified Sokolov gaming machine would not result in or even resemble the invention recited by Claims 1 and 11. Put simply, the combination of Sokolov and Fuji fails to teach or suggest a gaming machine including, among other features, an upper support member arranged at an upper position in one side of a second opening, wherein the upper support member defines a ceiling of the second opening; and a lower support member arranged at a lower position in the one side of the second opening, wherein the lower support member defines a bottom of the second opening. Claims 1 and 11 each recite such a feature.

For the reason(s) discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Sokolov and Fuji, alone or any combination thereof, fail to teach or suggest each and every feature recited by Claims 1 and 11. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11 are not rendered obvious by Sokolov and Fuji and should therefore be deemed allowable.

Baiuley, Kiesel and Baba are each cited for teaching hinge constructions. However, like Fuji above, Applicant respectfully submits that Baiuley, Kiesel and Baba each fail to cure or otherwise address the above described deficiencies of Sokolov.

For this/these reason(s), Applicant respectfully submits that any combination of Sokolov, Fuji, Baiuley, Kiesel and Baba fails to teach or suggest each and every feature recited by Claims 1 and 11. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 11 are not rendered obvious by Sokolov, Fuji, Baiuley, Kiesel and Baba and should therefore be deemed allowable.

Claims 2-10 depend, directly or indirectly, from Claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims should also be deemed allowable for at least same the reason(s) for Claim 1 is allowable.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of Claims 1-11, and the prompt issuance of a notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 024016.00073.**

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure: Petition for Extension for Time (3 months)